

**REGISTER OF
CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS**

Date of entry in Register: 27 August 2001
Name of applicant/court: Secretary for Internal Affairs
Applicant to the Labelling Body: Not Applicable
Title of Publication: The Color Purple
Other Known Titles: Not Stated
Director: Not Applicable
Producer: Not Applicable
Publisher: The Women's Press (UK)
Author: Alice Walker
Format: Book
Country of Origin: UK
Language: English

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Components of film originally examined: Not Applicable.

Feature: Running time:
Trailers: Running time:
Total Running time:

Excision/Alteration: Not Applicable.

Reason(s) for Excision:
Not Applicable.

Classification Decision:

Unrestricted.

Display Conditions:

Not Applicable.

Descriptive Note:

Not Applicable.

Direction to issue a label has been given on: Not Applicable.

SUMMARY OF THE REASONS FOR DECISION:

The book *The Color Purple* is classified as:
Unrestricted.

The book is a novel by American author Alice Walker, first published in 1983. It was submitted for classification following a complaint by a member of the public regarding its use as a school text. The major issues considered are the book's treatment of matters of sex and sexual violence, with other matters of cruelty and violence affecting the classification to a lesser extent.

The artistic merit and cultural and educational importance and value of *The Color Purple* has earned it a recognised place in 20th century literature. The story explores universal issues of poverty, racism and sexism, and the allied concerns of sexual abuse, early pregnancy, and family violence. There are passages describing a sexual relationship between two women that is tender and loving, and marked by mutual respect. The vividness and immediacy of the language used to describe sexual abuse gives this material a harsh reality and it is likely to have a strong emotional impact. However, while this writing has great power, it does not have a high level of detail and the overall story places the abuse within a social and historical context. The cruelty and violence dealt with in the book is similarly contextualised. The dominant effect of the book is of warmth, hope and self-affirmation.

The Classification Office acknowledges that the book's themes may make it difficult reading for younger persons. However, the book has been constantly in print and widely available and popular since it was first published and, to the Classification Office's knowledge, no evidence of harm has emerged during that time. While the book is perhaps more suitable for readers with some maturity, its themes are well within the ability of teenage readers to comprehend. It is unlikely that the book would have any great meaning or interest for younger children.

The classification places no restriction on the freedom of expression.

OFLC Ref: 100728